Cash Shortage with SEBs

*277. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the State Electricity Boards are suffering serious cash shortages; if so, the reasons therefor; and

(b) how Government propose to resolve the problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) It is a fact that most of the State Electricity Boards are suffering serious cash shortages. The reasons for this inter-alia, include, the widening gap between the average cost of supply and realisation, especially with regard to the agricultural sector; delay as well as inadequate revision of tariff; non-payment of rural electrification subsidy in cash by most of the State Governments; non-realisation of dues by SEBs for sale of power; low levels of capacity utilisation of existing plants; and high transmission and distribution losses.

(b) The Common Minimum National Action Plan for Power issued in December, 1996 after consultation with the State Governments, aims at an overall improvement in the functioning of the State Power Utilities. The Action Plan, inter alia, seeks to finalise a National Energy Policy; set up State Electricity Regulatory Commissions and a Central Electricity Regulatory Commission; rationalise retail tariffs, so that no sector pays less than 50% of the average cost of supply; facilitate autonomy of the State Electricity Boards and improve the management practices of these Boards; encourage improvement in physical parameters so that the overall PLF in the State Sector reaches a minimum level of 65% in the next 5 years; introduce compulsory metering at sub-stations and on all major feaders, compulsory annual energy audit of large consumers, and time of the dav metering for big power consumers for better load management etc.

Central Funds to Punjab Under MNP

*278. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of Central funds provided to Punjab under the Minimum Needs Programme (MNP) during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) the details of the Central assistance provided to the State during the current year for the purpose; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government for timely allocation of the required funds?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) The following amount of Central funds has been provided to the State of Punjab under the Minimum Needs Programme (MNP) during the last three years.

(Rs. in Crores)

	Name of the Programme	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
1.	Elementary Education	—	5.41	6.28
2.	Adult Education	0.50	2.39	3.39
3.	Rural Health	0.30	0.29	0.27
4.	Rural Water Supply	13.05	15.92	30.94
5.	Rural Housing	—	—	—
6.	Nutrition	12.50	7.60	10.26
7.	Rural Sanitation	—	1.01	0.27
	TOTAL:	26.35	32.62	51.41